

U.S. Congressman Mike Pence discussed tax cuts and the economy, cutting government spending, and the President's debt commission with David Gregory on NBC's Meet the Press this morning.

Excerpts:

On the Economy:

"When I'm home in Muncie, Indiana people are asking the question, 'Where are the jobs?' And we have more than 14 million Americans unemployed, national unemployment is 9.5 percent. Clearly the economic policies of this administration, however well-intentioned, have failed, and we have to do something different. And it's not just about preserving the tax relief of 2001 and 2003. It is also about beginning to embrace the kind of spending discipline and reform that will restore confidence to markets."

"You know that during the first six years of this decade I spent most of my time fighting against runaway spending under Republicans. I opposed 'No Child Left Behind.' I opposed the Medicare prescription drug bill. I opposed the Wall Street bailout."

On a Lame Duck Session:

"What the American people are starting to see is that Republicans on Capitol Hill get it and that Democrats from the White House to Capitol Hill just don't get it. You just heard Carol Browner here on the show say that they're intending, I think she said, possibly to use the lame duck session to pass a national energy tax. That is outrageous. What the American people know is necessary to get this economy moving again is to get federal spending under control, and preserve and promote the kind of policies and tax cuts that will create jobs."

On "Paying for" Tax Cuts:

"I think it's apples and oranges. It's something that John Boehner was talking to you about. Here in Washington, D.C. they talk about tax cuts the same way they talk about spending increases, as though the government owned all of the money. They say, 'Are they paid for?' I think deciding on a government spending increase is very different from whether or not we allow the American people to keep more of their hard-earned tax dollars. As John Boehner just said the most important thing right now is to get this economy moving again, to create jobs, and to get federal spending under control."

On Cutting Government Spending:

“I am for reforming our public entitlements for Americans who are far away from retirement. We need to keep promises to seniors that have been made, make sure that people who are counting on Medicare and Social Security have the benefits they have. But, for younger Americans, absolutely yes. We ought to bring real reform for the sake of future generations of Americans to get spending under control.”

On the President's Debt Commission:

“We have terrific people on the Republican side working on the debt commission and they're working in good faith on it. But, why the president imposed the debt commission that wouldn't report until after the election was a bit telling. The Republicans are not going to support an effort to use the debt commission as an excuse to raise taxes or to introduce a Value-Added tax.

“Let me get to the point. Todd wrote that provocative article in Vanity Fair about Washington being broken. He talked about the president's effort to transcend politics in Washington, and your reporting suggested the president made a concerted effort to reach out to Republicans early on. This administration hasn't sought to transcend the politics of Washington, D.C. This has been the ‘my way or the highway’ administration. From the stimulus bill forward, Democrats on Capitol Hill and in this administration have slammed the door on Republican ideas and have slammed the door on bipartisan proposals.

“I just saw on your program again this morning the president saying, even though we handed the president a book of Republican solutions in February at our retreat and he acknowledged that we have offered policy alternatives to stimulus, to budget, to energy, to healthcare. The president is back to that old song that Republicans have no ideas. I think that's the reason his approval rating is plummeting.

“I think there's a real concern, though, about going back to Andrews Air Force Base again. What was that back in 1990? Everybody gets all worried about spending and deficits and debt and all of a sudden they come back from Andrews Air Force Base with a tax increase under President George Herbert Walker Bush. Republicans are very, very concerned, I think properly, that this debt commission pushed into the lame duck after the elections is going to be a vehicle to raise taxes, which is a profoundly wrong idea.”

On Ethics Charges Against Rep. Charles Rangel:

“If the allegations against Charlie Rangel are true, he should step down from Congress. But only Charlie Rangel knows if that's the case. We're in the trial phase right now. The opportunity for a settlement, when two Republicans and two Democrats on the subcommittee were examining these charges, has gone by the boards. I really do believe that we ought to let Charlie Rangel have his day in court and let the process work.”

On Washington Not Working:

“The problems of this administration are not because of the media. They’re not because of lobbyists. They’re certainly not because of decisive Republican minorities on Capitol Hill. The problem with this administration is this administration and Democrats in Washington are not listening to the American people. On the stimulus, on the national energy tax, on ObamaCare they have rolled over the will of the majority of the American people again and again and again, and now they’re blaming the messenger.”